



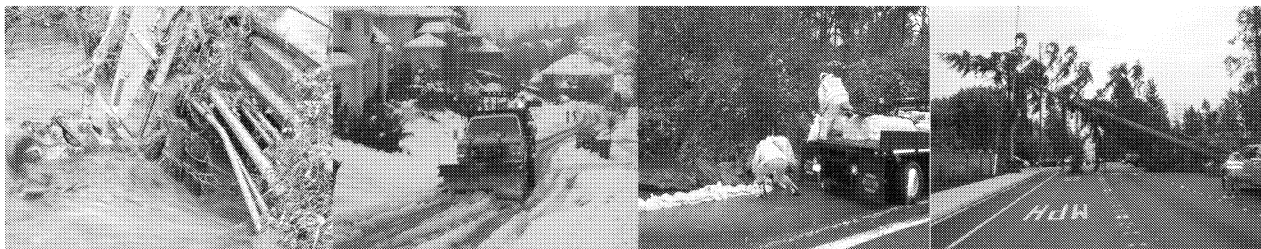
## ***Management Brief***

**TO:** Mayor Lee and Bellevue City Councilmembers

**FROM:** David Berg, Transportation Department Director

**DATE:** December 9, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Winter Weather Preparedness and Response



**Flooding**

**Ice and Snow**

**Landslides**

**Wind Storms**

Preparedness and response to winter weather is critical to successfully managing a safe transportation system for the City's many users. From past experience we have a wide range of weather during our winter season, from heavy rain and windstorms to snow and ice events. In addition, we have the challenge of Bellevue's topography with neighborhoods ranging in elevation from lake level to over 1400 feet. We also have some of the steepest roads in the region.

### **What is the 2013 winter weather outlook?**

While long-range forecasts are difficult to predict, current forecasts for this winter call for an equal likelihood of colder or warmer than normal conditions. The local meteorologists are predicting a winter with normal conditions punctuated by sporadic cold and moist conditions, resulting in the likelihood of some low elevation snow and ice.

Weather is monitored by Transportation staff year-round. Northwest WeatherNet provides Bellevue-specific forecasts daily and has local meteorologists available for questions 24-hours/day. We also utilize local NOAA weather forecasts and information available from the University of Washington.

### **Will the change in department management affect the City's response efforts?**

In June, the Street Maintenance section was reassigned to the Transportation Department from Utilities. A new Operations Manager, Brian Breeden, was hired in October to manage the Street Maintenance and Signal Operations sections. Brian is a returning City of Bellevue employee who had formerly worked as a Streets lead worker for 8 years, and brings with him 10 years of experience as the Streets Superintendent with the City of Shoreline.

With Brian's leadership, Transportation Street Maintenance staff will continue to work with the Utilities, Parks and Civic Services Departments in preparing for any event that may have an impact on the infrastructure and services the City provides to citizens. Staff is trained and ready for these events, not only from a response perspective, but also recovery working to restore all City services as quickly as possible.

### **How will the City respond to snow and ice events and manage expectations?**

The City has seven 4x4 vehicles that can be used in the hills and eight large 5-yard trucks that are primarily used on flats and main arterials. The timing and intensity of snow or freeze have an impact on response; if conditions deteriorate during a commute, the trucks cannot service the roadways as quickly or effectively due to the traffic.

Bellevue's elevation ranges present a public relations/expectations challenge for ice and snow response. Since many ice and snow events occur only in higher elevations, resources are usually sufficient to service the priority routes as well as residential streets. However, during a City-wide snowfall, priority routes need constant attention. If snow or ice conditions continue, the priority routes may require continuous plowing and/or deicing. In a prolonged freeze/thaw cycle or with ongoing snow accumulations, it is virtually impossible to service residential streets until the priority routes have been stabilized. The focus of response is always to do the most good for the most people. Staff are immediately dispatched if access is needed for fire or police response to a neighborhood.

### **What lessons were learned and improvements made for responding this winter season?**

- In November, Transportation held a table top exercise with department partners from Utilities, Parks and Civic Services, to discuss how the transition of Streets to Transportation would continue to be seamless during a snow event. Transportation will be now taking the lead during a snow event and will continue to work collaboratively with partner departments. Each department will continue to share resources as in the past. This collaboration and teamwork among departments takes a One City approach to weather response services.
- In recognition of the added service area from the newly-annexed areas south of I-90, the City added a 4x4 truck with plow and sander to the fleet. Plows and sanders for two existing pickups are also being added. These additional resources will quicken response on arterial roadways for clearing turn pockets and intersections - moving the larger trucks more quickly through the system - and will be a help when later working in neighborhoods.
- Staff has reviewed and expanded the routes for pre-storm anti-icing application.
- Recently, an electronic dispatch software was implemented which will reduce paper records in the dispatch area. This program was the work of a City employee: Matt Lebeau, - with staff input.

### **How will the City address parking on Highland Drive during snow and ice events?**

During snow and ice events, residents living on the steeper hills of Somerset park their vehicles along Highland Drive in areas where medians make it difficult for City plow operators to clear the road of snow, which could impede emergency responders. Based on Council input, approximately 250 residents were surveyed about parking restrictions earlier this year. A majority of responding households favored the "No Parking during Snow Events – Tow Away Zone"; however, many were concerned with the impacts the signing would create. Therefore, rather than installing the signs this year, we are asking residents to voluntarily comply with this restriction and refrain from parking on

Highland Drive during snow events. This will allow us the opportunity to review our plow operations this winter and to determine if signing or other measures are needed. The Somerset Community Association is supportive of this direction and will work with staff in evaluating next steps. A newsletter has been mailed to residents about this effort (Attachment A).

### **How will we keep the public informed?**

There are many ways the City is helping residents be prepared for emergencies, particularly those related to ice and snow events, such as:

- Web Information and “Extreme Weather” Button - online web access for up-to-date weather reporting and current response action plan. Additional links to related information such as the Bellevue School District web site and “frequently asked questions”.

*Drivers are encouraged not to drive during severe weather unless absolutely necessary. If they must drive, they should be prepared with the proper knowledge and equipment and use routes which are less steep and most likely to have been serviced. Familiarizing themselves with the priority response map ahead of time is beneficial.*



Visit [www.bellevuewa.gov](http://www.bellevuewa.gov), click on **EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE** to subscribe to automatic e-mail updates that explain when response conditions are forecast and how the City is preparing. In addition, the City's Snow Response Priorities map can be viewed as well as videos and information to help citizens prepare in advance for winter weather conditions.

- Ice and Snow videos - videos are available on the City web page, designed to help Bellevue drivers prepare for winter conditions.
- It's Your City articles – annual reminders of personal preparedness, driving safety for winter, where to find snow response priority maps and response information, and tips to help prevent flooding damage.
- “Snow Response Priorities” Map (Attachment B) - a key tool to ensure that resources are deployed appropriately during events. It is also available to citizens on-line for route-planning purposes.

### Attachments:

- A) Newsletter to Somerset Residents
- B) Snow Response Priorities Map

# No parking on Highland Drive during snow/ice events

## Requesting your cooperation

Highland Drive has been designated as a primary emergency response route for your community. When vehicles are parked along Highland between SE 52nd Place and 144th Place SE during snow events, it can be difficult for City plow operators to clear the road of snow. This could also impede emergency responders. Earlier this year, the City's Transportation Department asked your opinion regarding restricting parking on Highland Drive during snow and ice events.

The survey conducted in April of this year indicated the majority of responding households supported "No Parking during Snow Events – Tow Away Zone" restrictions. However, many were concerned with the impacts the signing would create. As a result, the City will not be installing signs but is asking you and your neighbors to **voluntarily comply** with this restriction by not parking on Highland Drive during snow events. We will spend this winter season reviewing how effective voluntary compliance is and whether future measures, such as signing, are needed.

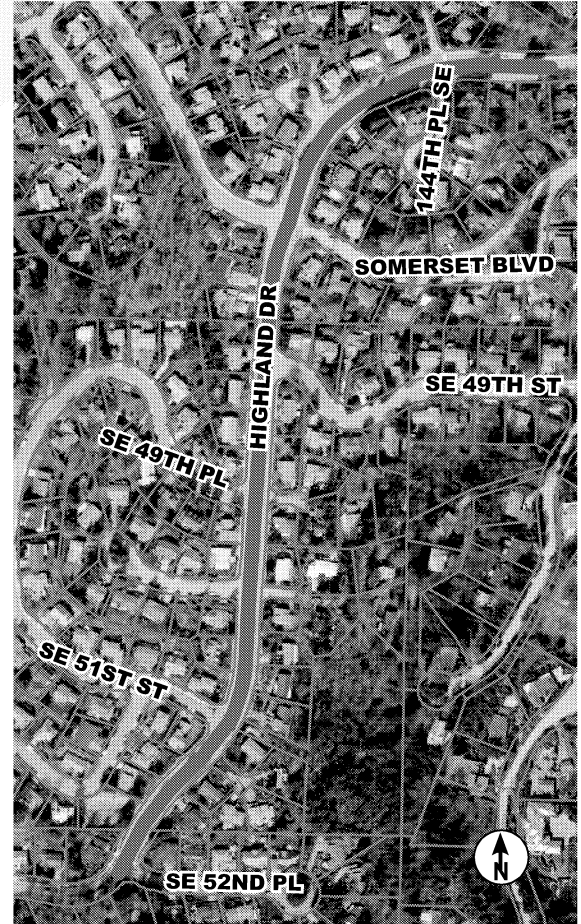
To be notified of upcoming snow and ice events, we encourage you to sign up for email/text alerts from the City's Extreme Weather page ([bellevuewa.gov/extreme\\_weather\\_response.htm](http://bellevuewa.gov/extreme_weather_response.htm)), or you can follow @BvueTrans on Twitter. Please do not park on Highland Drive if snow or ice is in the forecast, mentioned in an Extreme Weather Alert, or if you see snow falling. For those residents who live on steeper grades in the area, we encourage you to work with your neighbors or the Somerset Community Association for alternative areas to park, such as streets that are not main emergency routes or with approval, in neighbors' driveways along the flatter portion of the hills. Remember, vehicles impeding emergency response on any roadway during a snow/ice event may be towed.

Thank you for your cooperation.

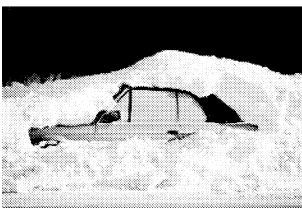


CITY OF BELLEVUE  
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

November 2013



No parking on Highland Dr between SE 52nd Pl and 144th Pl SE during snow/ice events



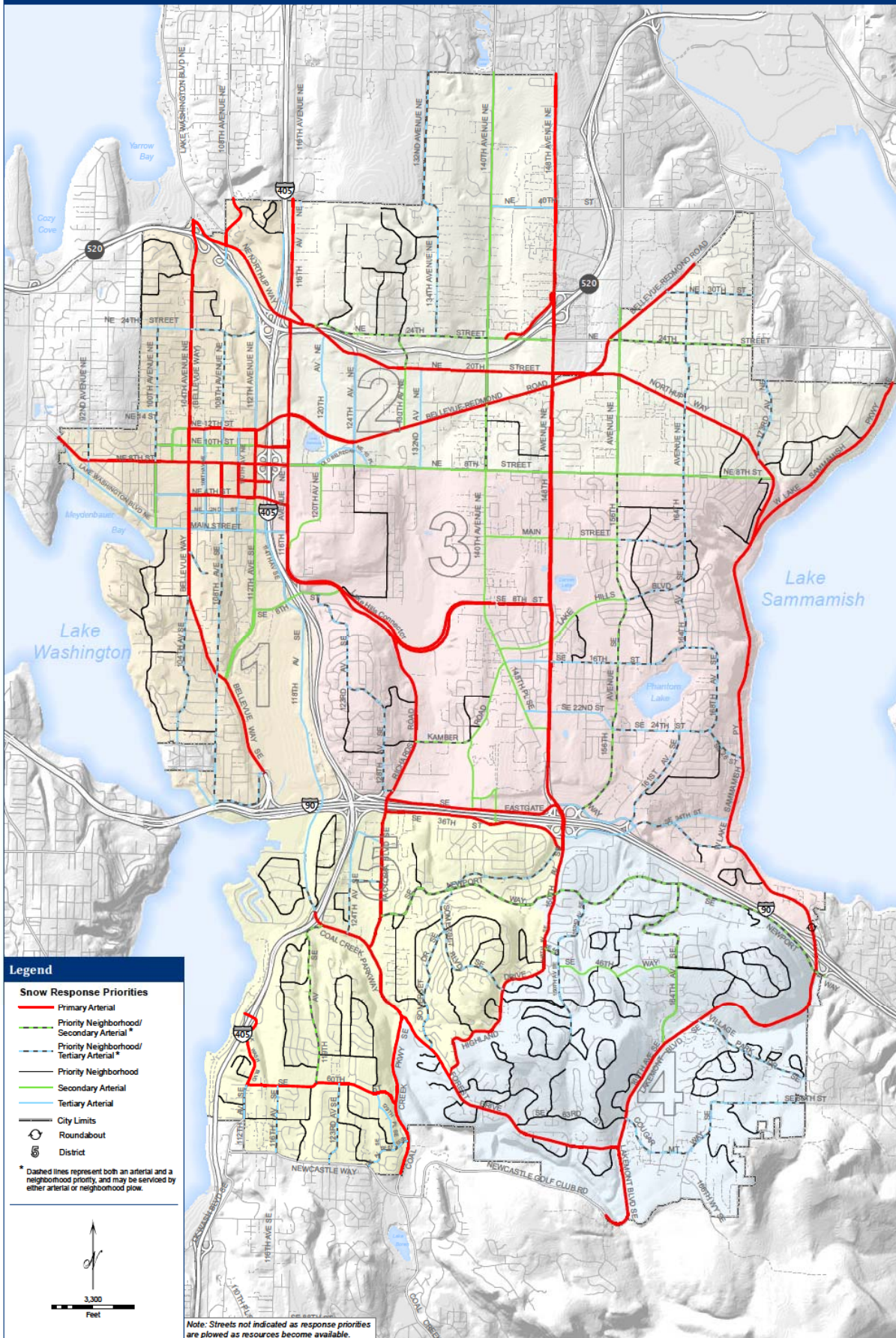
QUESTIONS?

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**ICE &  
SNOW**  
TAKE IT SLOW



# Snow Response Priorities



Plot Date: 11/15/2012 File Name: V:\nrogi\streets\Snowroutes\SnowRoute\_11x17\_update\_7-26-2012.mxd

IT Department